

Reform of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Mr. President, would you be willing to consider a permanent Palestinian state that included Chairman Arafat in some sort of ceremonial role or as President?

The President. As I mentioned—I think it was yesterday, I think, I had a press conference. My, time flies. The issue is bigger than any single person. And our discussions will center on how to have institutionals—institutions in place that will truly represent the will of the Palestinian people, that will give confidence to the world that we can spend money in a way that helps the Palestinians, that when we talk about security, there are security forces there aimed at protecting people from terrorist attack, as opposed to enabling people to stay in office.

You know, it's very interesting that these leaders came to our country to discuss peace, and the terrorists attacked. It's clear that a few want to damage the hopes of many. And by working to put institutions in place that will help on security and finances and government, institutions which will outlast any single leader—and so that's what we're going to discuss today.

Mark Smith [Associated Press Radio].

Middle East Security Arrangement/ Timing of Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the idea of having troops and others from the Egyptian and Saudi and Jordanian sides help train security forces for the Palestinians? And sir, yesterday there was another double suicide bombing just after you used the word “progress.” Do you think that's a coincidence?

The President. You know, I'm beginning to think that every time we have a high-level meeting, something happens. It's not coincidental. I think the enemies of peace try to send signals, try to derail peace, and try to discourage us. And one of the things I'm going to tell the leaders today is, we refuse to be discouraged. We're going to continue to work for peace, continue to push hard for peace, because we think it's a—we know it's in our vital interests.

In terms of who trains whom for security, that's part of the ongoing discussions, and that's what we want to discuss. George Tenet

has laid out a plan, and part of the plan is to work with the nations present here as to how to effect a security arrangement that will be effective and will work. That's what we want to do, and that's what we want to discuss.

Listen, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The President met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Maher of Egypt; Minister of Foreign Affairs Marwan Muasher of Jordan; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud al-Faysal al Saud of Saudi Arabia. A reporter referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks to the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York

July 19, 2002

The President. Thank you all. Thank you, General, and thank you all for such a warm welcome. I'm honored to be here. I've been looking forward to coming to Fort Drum.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. It gives me a chance to come to one of our Nation's finest military bases.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. But more importantly, it gives me a chance to speak to some of the finest Americans we have, our soldiers and their families. I'm proud of you. You have a vital mission, especially in this time of war. And you do it well, and you do the mission with honor.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The 10th Mountain Division patch stands for the skill and it stands for the power of our military, and it stands for the best values of the United States of America.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Many of you just returned from service abroad in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Others have come home from duty in Kosovo or Bosnia.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. And the Sinai.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Troops from this base will be needed again in missions yet to come.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. But you have the Nation's gratitude for all you've done and the Nation's confidence in all you will do.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I want to thank General Huber for his service to our country. I want to thank Judy Hagenbeck, the wife of Major General Buster Hagenbeck, with whom I got to speak via one of these teleconferencing apparati. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank General Larry Ellis for his leadership. I want to thank Colonel John Kelly. I want to thank Major General Ken Lopez. I want to thank all those who wear the uniform, on behalf of a mighty nation.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I want to thank my friend Governor George Pataki of the State of New York. I appreciate you being here, Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, who is here. I appreciate members of the New York congressional delegation who have taken time out of their schedules to come, Senator Clinton, Congressman McHugh, Congressman Boehlert, Congressman Reynolds, Congressman Sweeney, and Congressman Walsh. I want to thank the State officials who are here. I want to thank the local officials who are here. And I want to thank the veterans who are here with us today.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I know Watertown, New York, is proud to call hundreds of the veterans citizen, and the American people are so grateful to your service.

I want to thank the family members who are here today. Our country depends upon those who wear the uniform, and our country depends upon their family members too. I want to thank you for the sacrifices that you make on behalf of a nation. I want to thank the wives and the husbands and the sons and the daughters. We appreciate the commitments you make to your family and to your country. This Nation is grateful to our military families.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. This great base, the 10th Mountain Division, has a special place in American military history. Under different

names, Fort Drum has given continuous service to the defense of our country since the beginning of the last century. The ranks of the 10th Mountain Division have given distinguished and at times heroic service for six decades. This unit has produced some of the finest soldiers ever to wear the uniform——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——including a World War II veteran, one of the great living Americans, Senator Bob Dole.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. This division has now been called to play a central part in the first war of the 21st century. In the fight against terror, you are responding as you always have in times of danger. Because of you, and men and women like you in all branches of our military, we will defend this Nation, and we will defeat the enemies of freedom.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I can't imagine what the enemy was thinking. [*Laughter*] They must have thought we were so weak, so feeble a nation that we might, after September the 11th, file a lawsuit or two. [*Laughter*] They obviously had never been to Fort Drum. They didn't understand what I know, the character and the strength and the courage of the men and women of the United States military.

This war came upon us suddenly. The response has placed great demands on our military. Yet at every point in the chain of command, you were prepared for the orders that came. As Major General Hagenbeck has put it, when this division was called in September to deploy, nobody ever asked, "Are you ready?" It was assumed. And as the enemy found out, you were ready.

Within days, you stepped forward to guard against further attacks on the homeland. Within weeks, soldiers from Fort Drum were guarding bases in Uzbekistan and moving in to defeat a brutal regime in Afghanistan.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. You fought beside our allies in cold and rugged terrain, against trained and resourceful killers. You met the enemy half a world away, in his own element, yet the terrorists discovered no bunker could protect them.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Darkness couldn't conceal them.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. And there was no cave deep enough to save them.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The 10th Mountain Division cleared over 100 caves used by Al Qaida, seized more than 500 stockpiles of enemy ammunition, patrolled over 500 miles of border trails to block fleeing enemy, helped build or repair tent hospitals and deliver over a million pounds of food. In the Afghan campaign, more than 150 soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division were decorated for their noble actions, including one lieutenant colonel who calmly inspired his troops during 18 hours of grenade attacks and withering small arms fire.

When the 10th Mountain Division first arrived in Afghanistan, the Taliban was in power. When some of you left, the Taliban was in ruins, and the Afghan people were liberated.

For some of you, this may seem like a long war, particularly ones who have had loved ones overseas. But we've been at it for only 10 months. We have a great deal to show for our efforts. Our country leads a mighty coalition of civilized nations, joined in facing a common threat, a real threat to humanity. We're uncovering terrorist cells all across the world, disrupting plots against us. We're seizing terrorist assets and keeping terrorists themselves on the run.

So far, more than—thousands of terrorists have been captured, and thousands others, like several in the Philippines just weeks ago, weren't that lucky.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. One by one, they are meeting their fate, a fate they chose for themselves. Around the world, terrorists are learning that the justice of the United States of America cannot and will not be escaped.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Some members of our coalition need America's aid and advice, and they're receiving it. Other nations need help training their armies to fight terror, and we're providing that. Some parts of the world, there will be no substitute for direct action

by the United States. That is when we will send you, our military, to win the battles that only you can win.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. At this moment, around 60,000 Americans are deployed around the world in the war against terror. We've given great responsibilities to them and to you. And those of us in Washington have great responsibilities of our own. We must never cut corners when it comes to our national security. We owe our military every weapon you need, every dollar it takes to fight and to win this war.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We're making progress, and I appreciate the fact that Congress has stood behind me. I appreciate the support I've received in Congress. I've been able to rely on leaders of both political parties.

Earlier this year, I proposed the largest increase in military spending since Ronald Reagan was the President.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I did so because our troops must be well trained, well equipped, and well paid in order to fight and win this war.

We're investing in our military so we can deploy swift and agile forces anywhere, any time they're needed. We're building precision weapons that can spare the lives of American soldiers and lives of innocent civilians in foreign lands.

We will multiply every advantage—every possible advantage—so that we're prepared for any enemy, any enemy of freedom.

Audience member. Let's get Saddam.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. In March of this year, I asked Congress to put defense appropriations at the beginning of the legislative line, not the end. I asked them to stop playing that old trick, "We'll hold defense last."

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I think it needs to be first.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The House of Representatives responded. The Senate is still delaying. The Senate must act so that we can plan the war. The Senate must act, and it must act this month, on defense appropriations. Congress has the responsibility to put first things

first, and nothing comes before the freedom and the security of the American people.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. As we prepare our military for action, we will protect our military from international courts and committees with agendas of their own.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. You might have heard about a treaty that would place American troops under the jurisdiction of something called the International Criminal Court. The United States cooperates with many other nations to keep the peace, but we will not submit American troops to prosecutors and judges whose jurisdiction we do not accept.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Our Nation expects and enforces the highest standards of honor and conduct in our military. That's how you were trained. That's what we expect. Every person who serves under the American flag will answer to his or her own superiors and to military law, not to the rulings of an unaccountable international criminal court.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. This new war is going to take some time. We're in this for the long haul. After all, we defend our Nation we love. We defend the values we uphold. We love freedom—we love freedom. We love our freedoms, and we will defend them, no matter what the cost.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The work has just begun. And what we have begun, we will finish.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. In Afghanistan, coalition troops still have critical work, and the dangers haven't passed. Elsewhere, new threats are taking shape.

In this war, there will be times of quiet, and there will be times of crisis, times that call for patience, and times that call for sacrifice. As members of our military, you understand this as clearly as anyone. You know the nature of the threat.

Terrorism is fueled by boundless hatred. Terrorism will be stopped by a mighty nation with a strong and ready military.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We fight against a shadowy network that hides in many nations and

has revealed its intention to gain and use weapons of mass destruction. We're threatened by regimes that have sought these ultimate weapons and hide their weapons programs from the eyes of the world.

The same regimes have shown their true nature by torturing and butchering their own people. These tyrants and terrorists have one thing in common: Whatever their plans and schemes, they will not be restrained by a hint of humanity or conscience.

The enemies of America no longer need great armies to attack our people. They require only great hatred, made more dangerous by advanced technologies. Such enemies—against such enemies, we cannot sit quietly and hope for the best. To ignore this mounting danger is to invite it. America must act against these terrible threats before they're fully formed.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We will use diplomacy when possible and force when necessary.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We will prepare deliberately and act decisively.

Our commitment should be clear to all, to friend and enemy alike: America will not leave the safety of our people and the future of peace in the hands of a few evil and destructive men.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. In this war, we fight against the advance of terror and its agents. We also fight for the advance of freedom and human dignity. We do more than oppose an ideology of violence and hatred; we offer a vision of democracy and development that can overcome resentment and despair in every part of the Earth.

Seldom have the ideals of freedom been under greater threat. Seldom have the ideals of freedom had greater appeal. This Nation, this generation, you all have been entrusted with the ideals and with their defense. This is a charge we bear. This is a charge we shall keep.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Your duties will take you many places. In some places, you and your fellow soldiers may be the only representatives of justice and order. As members of our military, you will stand between American

citizens and grave danger. You will stand between civilization and chaos. And you will stand for liberty and tolerance and truth, the ideals of America and the hope of the entire world. Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division and men and women of the Armed Forces, I'm honored to serve with you.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. This is a decisive moment in the history of freedom. As your Commander in Chief, I leave you this message: Be proud, be strong, and be ready.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. May God bless you all. May God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. at Division Hill. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber, USA, assistant division commander operations, and Sgt. Maj. Kenneth C. Lopez, USA, 10th Mountain Division; Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck, USA, commander, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum; Lt. Gen. Larry R. Ellis, USA, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations and Plans; Col. John J. Kelly, USA, commander, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Drum; and Lt. Gov. Mary O. Donohue of New York. An audience member referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 14

In the afternoon, the President returned from Camp David, MD, to Washington, DC.

July 15

In the morning, the President had intelligence briefings. He then traveled to Birmingham, AL, where he participated in a roundtable meeting with business leaders at the Alys Stephens Center at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will meet with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka at the White House on July 24.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic to Washington, DC, on September 18.

July 16

In the morning, the President had CIA and FBI briefings. He then met with Members of Congress to discuss proposed homeland security legislation.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, and a bipartisan group of her supporters from Texas, including Senators Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison and leaders of the Texas bar.

The White House announced that the President will welcome King Abdullah II of Jordan to the White House on August 1.

The President announced his nomination of Antonio O. Garza, Jr., to be Ambassador to Mexico.

July 17

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings and then met with the National Security Council.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marion C. Blakey to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Pamela F. Olson to be Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roger P. Nober to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board and, upon confirmation, to be designated Chairman.

July 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Rochester, MI, with President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland. Later, they traveled to Troy, MI.

In the afternoon, the two Presidents returned to Washington, DC.